

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 1231

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: MRS. GANDHI ON INDO-US RELATIONS

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. MRS. GANDHI TOOK ADVANTAGE OF QUESTIONS ASKED HER IN SEVERAL INTERVIEWS SHE GAVE FOR PUBLICATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIAN REPUBLIC TO COMMENT ON INDO-US RELATIONS. (REMARKS BY MRS. GANDHI ON OTHER ISSUES ARE REPORTED SEPTTEL.)

2. IN HER MOST EXTENSIVE STATEMENT ON RELATIONS WITH THE US, MRS. GANDHI RESPONDED TO A QUESTION BY THE NATIONAL HERALD (JANUARY 26) AS TO WHETHER INDIA AND THE US WERE ANY CLOSER  
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IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A MATURE RELATIONSHIP ON

THE BASIS OF EQUALITY. SHE REPLIED: "THIS HISTORY OF INDO-US RELATIONS IS COMPLICATED. IT WOULD BE WRONG TO TAKE A LIMITED VIEW. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT OUR POLICIES ARISE FROM OUR WON HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND OUR ASSESSMENT OF OUR NATION'S LONG-TERM INTERESTS. WE EXTEND SUPPORT TO NATIONAL FREEDOM MOVEMENTS. WE WISH TO HAVE FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL COUNTRIES IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES. WE ARE NON-ALIGNED AND HAVE KEPT ALOOF FROM POWER BLOCS. WE DO NOT WISH TO FIT INTO ANYBODY ELSE'S GLOBAL STRATEGIES. THE DESIRE TO EQUATE AND BALANCE INDIA AND PAKISTAN WAS A MAJOR BLOCK TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE OF RETHINKING ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES. WE NATURALLY WELCOME THIS TREND. AMERICA HAS ALSO SHOWN CONSIDERABLE IMAGINATION IN THE AGREEMENT WHICH WAS CONCLUDED FOR THE FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE PL-480 FUNDS. WE SHOULD VIEW THE DISCUSSION OVER THE TERMS OF THE GRAIN SUPPLIES AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND. IF THE US APPLIES THE SAME CONDITIONS FOR ALL SALES, WE CANNOT COMPLAIN. ALL THE LITTORAL STATES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WANT IT TO BE A ZONE OF PEACE. MILITARY PRESENCES WILL INCREASE TENSION AND RIVALRY AND COULD CREATE AN INFLAMMABLE SITUATION. LET US HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL TAKE NOTE OF THE SENTIMENTS OF THE NATIONS OF THIS AREA.

3. THE INTERVIEWER THEN ASKED, "WHILE ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD YOU KINDLY GIVE YOUR REACTION TO THE REPORTED STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT FORD NOT RULING OUT MEASURES TO MAINTAIN BY FORCE THE UNSATIATED WESTERN APPETITE FOR ARAB OIL?" SHE REPLIED:

"OIL IS NOT THE ONLY OR THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE WORLD MONETARY CRISIS. THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER CAUSES AND THEY SHOULD ALL BE CONSIDERED TOGETHER. IN FACT, THE CRISIS DEMANDS A TOTALLY NEW APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. SUCH A NEW APPROACH CAN COME ABOUT THROUGH DEEP-PROBING DISCUSSIONS AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEMS OF ALL NATIONS INCLUDING THE DEVELOPING ONES. FORCE IS NO SOLUTION, IT ONLY GENERATES NEW KINDS OF PROBLEMS."

4. ASKED A MORE GENERAL QUESTION ON INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY BY THE CONGRESS-PARTY WEEKLY "SOCIALIST INDIA," THE PRIME MINISTER  
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OBSERVED THAT "THE FOG WHICH HAD DECENDED OVER OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US HAS ALSO BEGUN TO CLEAR."

5. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ON HER DOMESTIC OPPONENTS, MRS. GANDHI MADE VAGUE REFERENCES TO FOREIGN OPPONENTS OR THE EFFORTS OF THE OPPOSITION TO CHANGE INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY. WILL THE OPPOSITION "JETTISON FRIENDSHIP WITH PROVEN FRIENDS," SHE RHETORICALLY ASKED THE NATIONAL HERALD INTERVIEWER?

"WILL THEY GIVE UP FRIENDSHIP WITH THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED US CONSISTENTLY IN MOMENTS OF DIFFICULTY, IN THE HOPE THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HOSTILE WILL COME TO OUR ASSISTANCE?", SHE ASKED SOCIALIST INDIA'S INTERVIEWER IN THE SAME CONTEXT.

6. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA'S WEEKLY "LINK" IN A LONG INTERVIEW WAS UNABLE TO GET THE PRIME MINISTER TO SAY ANY THING DIRECTLY CRITICAL OF THE US BUT DID SUCCEED IN GETTING SOME INNUENDOS. REFERRING TO PAST PROBLEMS WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTED INDIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH, MRS. GANDHI NOTED THE WAR WITH CHINA, THE PAKISTAN WARS, SEVERE DROUGHTS, THE REFUGEE INFLUX AND THAT "WE HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF CERTAIN AID POLICIES..." COMMENTING ON THE ANTI-CONGRESS MOVEMENT DOMESTICALLY, MRS. GANDHI OBSERVED THAT "IT IS ALSO A FACT THAT CERTAIN FORCES OUTSIDE TAKE QUITE A DEEP INTEREST." SHE REFERRED TO THE DOMESTIC "FORMIDABLE COMBINATION AGAINST US, WITH BACKING FROM OUTSIDE FORCES WHO WOULD NOT LIKE INDIA TO BE STRONG AND WHO GENERALLY DISAPPROVE OF MANY OF OUR POLICIES," BUT DECLINED TO BE DRAWN BY LINK'S INTERVIEWER ON WHO SUCH EXTERNAL FORCES MIGHT BE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

7. (CONFIDENTIAL:) COMMENT: THE INTERVIEW WITH LINK LASTED TWO HOURS AND THE PRINTED VERSION IN THE MAGAZINE IS CLEARLY ONLY PARTIAL AND DESIGNED TO MAKE THE POINTS LINK ITSELF WANTED TO STRESS. OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION IS THAT, WHEN ASKED SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT INDO-US RELATIONS MRS. GANDHI IS ENDEAVORING TO PROJECT A POSITIVE AND HELPFUL TONE. THE MORE DUBIOUS ELEMENTS CREEP IN, HOWEVER, WHEN SHE IS TALKING IN A STRICTLY DOMESTIC CONTEXT IN WHICH SHE FINDS IT USEFUL TO SLUB HER OPPOSITION WITH ANY NEGATIVE IMAGE SHE CAN FIND. WE WOULD EXPECT THIS AMBIGUITY TO CONTINUE TO FIND AN OUTLET IN THE PM'S STATEMENTS. (END CONFIDENTIAL.)

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